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Memorial of the centenary
celebration of the French
Creek Presbyterian Church

MEMORIAL

of the CENTENARY CELEBRATION
of the FRENCH CREEK
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AUGUST TWENTY-THIRD & TWENTY-FOURTH
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND NINETEEN

Compiled and Edited by
HARRY W. VANCE

Library

REV. LOYAL YOUNG, D. D.

REV. S. HALL YOUNG, D. D.

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HARRY W. VANCE

French Creek, W. Va.

PREFACE

EARLY in the nineteenth century several families of New England Yankees moved in wagons drawn by horses and oxen into the wilderness region of what is now Upshur County, West Virginia. The families came from Massachusetts, Connecticut and Vermont and settled in the forest, at the end of the road, on the waters of a small mountain stream known as French Creek. The first family to make the journey was that of Zedekiah Morgan, who came from Connecticut in 1801. In 1808 Aaron Gould came from Charlemont, Mass., and three years later (1811) Robert Young and Gilbert Gould came with their families from the same state and joined the little settlement. From 1814 to 1816 there arrived the families of Elijah Phillips, David Phillips, Nathan Gould, Jonathan Alden, and Daniel Haines, all from different points in Massachusetts. In 1816 Rev. Asa Brooks joined the colony, having been sent as a missionary from Halifax, Vermont, by the Central Association of Hampshire County, Mass.

In 1819 the people of the community organized the French Creek Presbyterian Church, under the leadership of Rev. Asa Brooks, with fourteen members. Aaron Gould and Robert Young were elected as Ruling Elders on July 5th of that year. A house of worship was constructed of logs, but a few years later this was replaced by a more substantial frame building. During the Civil War, Union soldiers encamped in the church accidentally set the building on fire, and it was burned. Another house was soon thereafter erected on the same site and this still stands as a place of worship and community center.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the organization of the church, which was in the year 1869, Rev. Loyal Young, D. D., the pastor and a son of Robert Young, one of the first Ruling Elders, preached an anniversary sermon entitled "Fifty Years in the Wilderness." This sermon was printed in pamphlet form and is a historic document of great local value.

On August 23 and 24, 1919, the centenary anniversary of the church was celebrated by one of the most remarkable gatherings that ever assembled at French Creek. The people met in the grove of oak and hickory trees which surrounds the church early in the afternoon of Saturday, August 23. From a platform which had been erected in the grove addresses were made by the pastor, Rev. A. C. Powell, and by a former pastor, Rev. W. J. Hazlett. On the following Sabbath morning the centenary sermon was preached by Rev. S. Hall Young, D. D., a son of Dr. Loyal Young who preached the semi-centennial sermon of the church. The sermon was delivered by the son from the same pulpit used by the father and a choir composed of persons who heard the semi-centennial sermon rendered "How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord," with Mrs. Almira Brooks Moore as organist.

In the afternoon addresses were made by two former pastors, Rev. Roy F. Miller and Rev. Earle A. Brooks, D. D., and by Rev. Warren H. Wilson, Ph. D., Director of Church and Country Life Work for the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

The weather for the occasion was ideal and long intervals were given between services for old friends to meet and visit in the grove. The register was signed by more than seven hundred persons, many of them visitors from other states. The following pages contain the addresses of the various speakers and other matter of interest connected with the great celebration.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

By REV. A. C. POWELL

IT affords me great pleasure as the pastor of this church to welcome you one and all in behalf of this church and the citizens of this community. It matters not what your church relations may be you are welcome to help in this Centennial and to participate in its blessings. To our sister congregation of this place we doubly welcome you. You are a part of this community and we could not get along without you.

To the Presbyterian congregation of Buckhannon we would say that while that church is a child of this church you are simply performing your duty by coming home. You are always welcome at home.

And now to the former pastors and sons of this church as well as others who are on this program, we extend to you a brotherly greeting and a hearty welcome. We do not consider you in the light of strangers in a strange land, for your fame has preceded you and in our homes your names are known in connection with your accomplishments, and the noble work you have done in your field of labor. We have endeavored to arrange matters in connection with this celebration so as to make your stay with us a source of pleasure and recreation as well as a feast of spiritual things. We feel that the cause of your mutual relationship to this church, and your sympathy with its future progress as well as the kind and helpful words you will speak to us, will inspire us to greater efforts in the continuation of the noble and glorious work of this church. Not only the speakers but many of you have come home and the review of a hundred years of this church and community will bring to your memory things of your childhood that will stir your emotions that will give you joy or sorrow. There is no other balm for the soul that is equal to an occasion like this, when parents and children, brothers and sisters, friends and loved ones, shed tears mingled with joy and sorrow as they greet each other. This has been your home, the spot your infancy knew. Here is where you received your early training which made life worth living, here is where many of you were inspired to form ideals of life which have not only been a blessing to you but to the world because of the life you have lived. This is the world of your activity that will furnish you material for your dreams in later life. The following lines may suggest the sentiments of your minds during your stay with us:

"How I would like to go back if I could,
Back to my boyhood once more if I could,
Back to the days when I roamed in the wood
Free as the squirrel that grinned on the tree,

Saucily squinting and blinking at me.
How I would like to go back if I could,
Just for an hour to live in the wood,
Live a boy's life and roam in the wood,
Feel the keen joyance of light heart and free;
The chipmunk and groundmole my fast friends should be;
Answer the cricket and treefrog again,
Mimic the throstle and wild warbling wren,
No such keen pleasures I've had all these years,
And fond recollections rise almost to tears,
As I think of the days when I roamed in the wood;
And my long lost companions I had in the wood.

And Oh for the days I spent by the brook,
Fishing for minnows with bent pin or hook;
How I would like to go back to the brook
To gather white pebbles, for clam shells to look,
To watch the fish play and the kingfisher dive;
Oh how I would like to go back to the brook,
Where often in Springtime my journey I took,
Just to catch minnows with bent pin and hook!

How I would like to go back if I could,
Back to the house that stood far up the lane,
And find all the things there exactly the same,
The woodpile, the wellsweep, the garden so trim,
The home of my childhood, both outside and in,
And mother to greet me, as often I came,
Trudging foot-sore and weary up the long lane,
That dear sweet young mother, who long years ago
So tenderly loved me, (she oft told me so);
When twillight would gather she tucked me in bed,
And see, "Now I lay me" was properly said;
O God! I would give all I am or shall be,
To be one more night at that dear mother's knee;"

Author, ISAAC C. KETLER.

How I would like to go back if I could
Back to the place where I heard from the book,
Back to the church that stood on the hill;
Where many have learned to do the Lord's will;
The pastor to greet me, the teacher to lead me,
The music to inspire me, the word to enlighten me,
Just to sit in my seat so quiet and still,
To listen to the Spirit as he my soul would fill,
With a knowledge of Him who taught me His will,
Oh! how I would like to go back if I could,
Back to the church that stood in the wood.

We welcome you because by your presence we can more fully accomplish the object and purpose of this Centennial, and you coming from all directions of the compass will carry the good tidings to the ends of the earth.

In the deliberations of this occasion we must find the secret which made it possible for our fathers to live such noble Christian lives, and for a century continue the noble work of Christ's Kingdom in this church. Here in this place God's people have been made "To sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus that in the ages to come He might show forth the exceeding riches of His grace." We are fully convinced that the early settlers having come from the New England states brought with them the creed and sterner qualities of the faith of the Pilgrim Fathers. It is true that, "The blessings of God upon the fathers shall be visited unto the third and fourth generation of them that love Him and keep His commandments."

A few thoughts of the Pilgrim Fathers will be sufficient for our purpose. The Pilgrim Church at Leyden numbered about three hundred souls—A Gideons Band. Through the influence of the Calvinistic doctrines the Pilgrims renounced the Church of England, and in the strength of the creed continued loyal to the reformed party at Leyden. Calvin in their minds was the greatest of the reformers—a veritable Jupiter of Europe. His doctrine of Predestination was a menace to all theories of the divine right of kings, and by consequence his teachings were exceedingly obnoxious to the ruling classes. The emphasis that Calvin gave to the sovereignty of God and the parity of man made his creed a large political factor in Europe. This was their creed, a faith predestinate to sway the world: These are the words of the late Isaac C. Ketler, President of Grove City College:

"These were God fearing exiles, thrice three years and two, in refuge from the wrath of catchpool—Priests, (a British breed of freedom loving men), anon to hear God's voice in Leyden, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

Bring crowns!
For held they not the truth a higher boon
Than life, and left their native lands, with ties
Of hearth and home, to save sweet liberty?
Bring mitre and tiara, tripple crown,
The fadeless fillet, (cap of sovereignty),
The votive incence, which bespeaks the choice
Of men greater than earthly kings to high
And holy services; and bring withal,
Green oaken wreathes and iron crowns, for they
Were strong! For they were unblanched by fear of man,
They stood for God, let come the worst, had armed
Themselves withal the armor of God's word:
Had girt their loins with truth, had crowned their heads
With helmets of His saving grace; had shod

Their feet with the swift tidings of His peace.
With breast plates of the righteousness of God,
With shields of faith and flaming swords of His
Eternal truth they dared resist King James,
His venal Church, with prelates, bishops, priests,
And hangdog crew."

These beautiful lines protray to us the life and character of the Pilgrims. The early missionaries who were sent to this place no doubt, put into practice much of the program of the Pilgrim fathers. These people had noble ideas and did their best to work them out. There is evidence here today of the fact that our fathers early in the history of this community put stress upon the development of the Fourfold life, physical, intellectual, social and religious. The religious was pre-eminent and became a guide and a protection for the other three. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things shall be added unto you." This commandment has been largely obeyed. The doctrines of the Presbyterian church, and the traditions of the fathers have been guarded and promulgated with jeolous care. The three special means of grace for the Christian believer, study of the word, prayer and church attendance have been open channels to the members of this church. By the constant use of these channels of blessing, God has been able to do much for this community. Prayer, and faith in the answer to prayer has been a special source of power.

For more than a century the people of this community have been a praying people. In simple faith they have through the years asked God's watchful care over the health of the people and the schools and churches of the community, and in loving kindness God has raised up among the direct descendants of a single one of the first Ruling Elders of this church, no fewer than nine physicians, sixty-five school teachers and seven ministers of the Gospel. They have asked God to bless the growing crops and the business interests of the community and in a hundred years there is not a record of one person being sent to the county poor house from French Creek. They have asked God to bless the boys and girls who grow up here, and so many of our boys and girls have gone forth into the world to fill high places of honor and service that those who stay in the old home are often put to it to keep alive the interests of the community. They have asked for temporal and physical blessings, and we have no blind, no deaf and dumb and few distressed cripples. Of course death and sorrow, which are the lot of man, come to the people here as they do elsewhere, but how merciful God has been in shielding us from pestilence and scourges of disease and death. When the influenza, small-pox, diphtheria and typhoid have swept away the inhabitants of other places, how relatively few of our people have been taken? From our churches and from a hundred homes prayers have ascended for our soldiers, and in the recent war only one from this immediate locality died upon the field of battle, and most of our boys have come home stronger and better than when they went away. Who will say that God has not heard

and answered the prayers of our people from the days when this church was first conceived even unto the present time?

Now what shall we say about the present and the future? It is always a temptation which grows stronger the longer we live to look backward instead of forward, to bemoan the past, and thus deride the present and distrust the future. We must not forget our present blessings, the love we still possess, the gracious influences that remain. The presence today of the sons and daughters of the early saints of this church who are filling their places of honor and duty, and fathers, mothers and children, of the present generation, and those who have come from other communities and united themselves with this church are in a very able manner continuing the noble work of Christ and His kingdom in this place that was begun by our forefathers a hundred years ago. We are today standing upon the same foundation of faith and doctrine. We have the same regard for the divine institutions, the home, the church, the state. There is nothing left undone to protect and continue the blessings of these institutions. During the great World war of the last four years this whole church was burning with the fire of patriotism and love for the welfare of humanity. Our hearts went out in extensive love and sympathy to the ends of the world, and our gifts of sacrifice followed them. Five of our sons enlisted in the service of their country, two of these crossed the sea, one became a Lieutenant and two reached the rank of Corporal. God in His providence saw fit to return to us all of the boys sound and uninjured. The whole congregation from the least to the greatest contributed in some way of their means and service to humanity. Every member of the Sunday School and Church belonged to the Red Cross, and contributed toward its support, and in many other ways made their influence felt.

The church in the last year has more than doubled its contributions for benevolent purposes and met the requirements of the New Era movement of the church-at-large. The church is thoroughly organized; a strong Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society, a live Christian Endeavor, a fine Young Ladies' Guild and a frontline school with class and department organizations, five organized Bible classes of which four are adult. We have the Hall Young class for the men and the Hazlett class for the women. We have a permanent teacher training organization. The present class consists of fourteen scholars. The school has a strong and efficient corps of teachers, and is doing excellent work.

The congregation maintains the high standard of education for its children. Among the families of the church and their children there are thirty-five school teachers, seven doctors, two ministers, thirteen graduates of colleges, seven of the children are in college, and twelve are teachers in active service. The Young Ladies' Guild a few years ago had fourteen members and twelve of them were school teachers.

The future of the church as to a large measure in membership is not so encouraging, but as to quality and efficiency for the future work of this church is very bright. I think we are all aware of the fact that

a strenuous future lies ahead of us. In the desert the heart much reach forward to the promised land and not back to Egypt. The Christian faith is for the future, because it believes in the God of the future. The world is not a lumber room, full of relics and remembrances over which to brood.

We are asked to remember the beautiful part which was ours, and the beautiful lives which we have lost, by making the present beautiful like it, and our lives beautiful like theirs. It is human to think that life has no future, if now it seems "Dark with griefs and graves." It comes to us like a shock when we think of the fact that this beautiful Centennial day, with all of its emotions memories of past events will have past into history by the setting of the sun, and by the rising thereof. We come in contact with the hard world again, and live our common life once more. The Christian learns to do it, not because he has a short memory, but because he has a long faith. The voice of inspiration is heard oftener through the realities of life, than through vain regrets and recluse dreams. Let our future life be like our Master's, luminous with His hope and full of love and devotion to our Father's work. Let our watch word be faith, prayer and work.

The world is old, but the heart is young,
And its sweetest songs are yet unsung.
Earth's richest treasures are yet unsought;
Earth's bravest battles are yet unfought.
As we slowly mount earth's heights sublime,
We read these words on the wall of time:
"No room in the age for the drone to shirk-
For the end of the world is honest work."

With a disc of glass in His careful hand,
As He fashions a lens, see the Master stand!
His work is finished, and mounted on high
A mighty telescope sweeps the sky.
Then work and win, for the world is wide,
And its doors will open on every side.
Look not on the past with a vain regret,
For "The best things haven't happened yet."

MRS. ANNA S. SMILEY.

RESPONSE TO ADDRESS OF WELCOME

By REV. W. J. HAZLETT

MR. PRESIDENT, I thank you for such a hearty welcome. It should indeed be a special privilege to me to respond to your very cordial welcome. And in the matter of being here, I am reminded of an incident in the family of one of our Home Missionary fields.

The missionary had received a call to a field much more to the comfort of his family, but was debating with himself as to the acceptance of the call. A neighbor asked one of his little boys if his father would accept the call. The answer the boy gave was this: "Papa is praying about it, but mamma is packing up our things."

Now as to my being here today, I'll not say anything about the praying, but there was one who was packing up the things.

This is a great occasion—a Presbyterian Church centenary. Many worthwhile things could be said of any of our Christian denominations. But I know that none of you will think it unbrotherly if, today, we will largely speak of the Presbyterian and the things which the Presbyterian denomination stands for.

This is briefly stated in the answer to the second question in The Shorter Catechism. "The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him!"

The Presbyterian Church sets a high estimation on the child. Our forefathers in French Creek, then the Wilderness, had high ideals as to the education of the child, both as to secular and spiritual things. Was it not in the log dwelling house of Robert and Lydia Gould Young that the first day school was held, the teacher, one of their sons, a lad of twelve or thirteen years. We must believe that the boy had a good assistant in his mother. You remember the answer Benjamin West, the famous colonial painter, gave when asked how he attained such eminence in his art. It was, "My Mother's kiss made me a painter."

The church and the school house together is the idea of Presbyterians.

It has been said, "Were you at the North Pole you would find a Presbyterian, and find him educating the North Pole."

A local incident is well worth recording, coming in the life and experience of the lamented Hon. Thomas E. Hodges.

It being known that his parents were moving to come and live in French Creek, one speaking of it to the boy said it was a great place for schools and Presbyterians. He did come to French Creek. He did learn scholastic studies; but he also learned of the Savior and some thirty-five years after this on one occasion when he came back to

REV. A. C. POWELL REV. E. A. BROOKS, D. D.
REV. W. O. PHILLIPS REV. W. J. HAZLETT REV. S. HALL YOUNG, D. D.

us to deliver a lecture, he and his son, Charles, a boy ten years old, and the writer came to look into the Presbyterian Church during the afternoon. We did not have the key with us, but we crawled through a window. I know it was with much interest that he stood and looked over the inside of the sacred place. And while there he pointed out to me the seat to which the late Richard Young brought him the night he took a stand for Christ. Those who have known him, know what a stand he took, how well he stood, with what emphasis and reverence he would say, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

The noted historian, Froude, not too much spiritually minded, has said, "For the first two hundred years of colonial times, every school and every institution of learning were built and sustained by Calvinists." See the Constiution of the United States; how largely it is modeled after the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church.

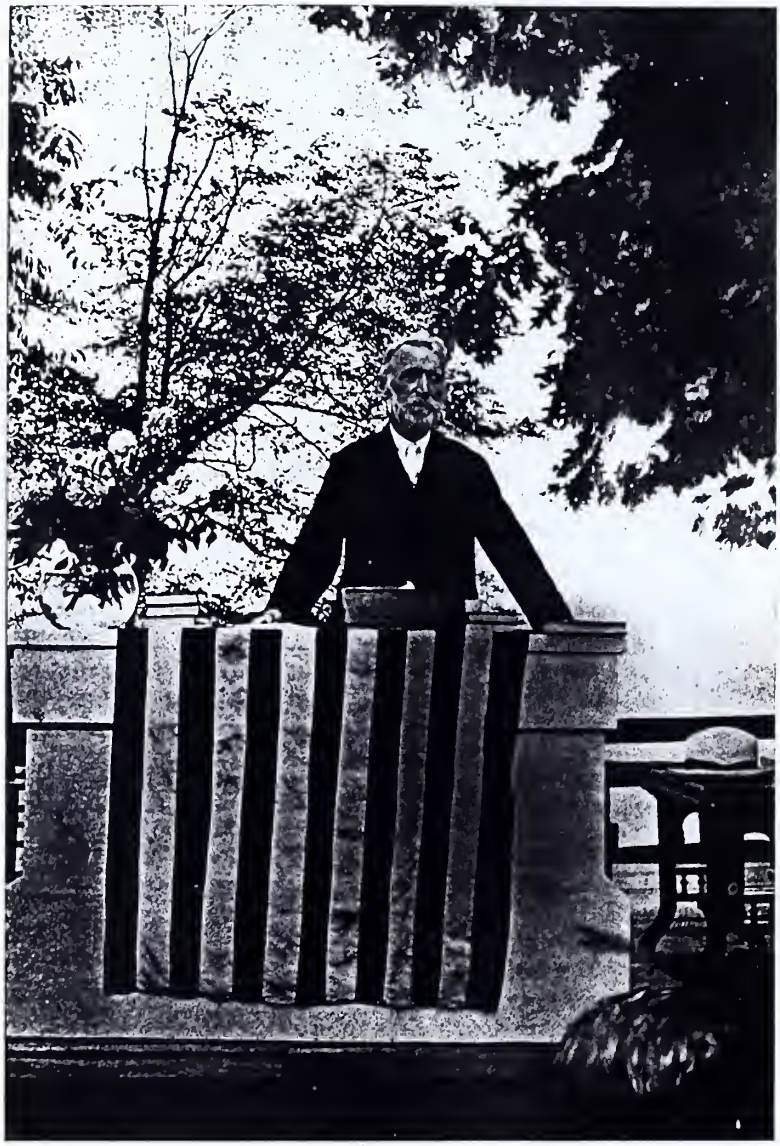
What a multitude of martyrs and confessors, who, from the very earliest ages, have professed, defended and suffered for the Scriptural Doctrine and Order known as Presbyterianism!

As late as 1681-1724, in what is now Maryland and Virginia, the Reverend Francis McKamie of County Donegal, Ireland, who came at the appealing call of the lonely immigrants, suffered imprisonment and payment of heavy costs for preaching in a private house and baptizing a child.

"Let children hear the mighty deeds
Which God performed of old,
Which in our younger years we saw
And which our fathers told.

"Thus shall they learn on God alone
Their hope securely stands
That they may ne'er forget His works
But practice His commands."

Psalm 78.



¶ Dr. S. Hall Young delivering the Centennial Sermon from the same pulpit used by his father, Dr. Loyal Young, in delivering the Semi-Centennial Sermon.

ONE HUNDRED FAITHFUL YEARS

(1819-1919) CENTENARY SERMON

By S. HALL YOUNG, D. D.

MY FATHER, Loyal Young, of all the men I have known, has always stood forth as, in my judgment, the closest type of a perfect Christian man. At my ordination to the Gospel Ministry forty-one years ago the fifth of May, during the meeting of the Presbytery of West Virginia at Buckhannon, he delivered the charge to the candidates. He used no words of his own except the changing of a few proper names. He simply read the most of the Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy.

I remember my own sense of unworthiness mingled with exaltation of spirit as father solemnly read, "I, Loyal, a minister of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Samuel Hall, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lydia, and thy mother Margaret; and I am persuaded in thee also."

Therefore, I am taking as my theme: *One Hundred Faithful Years.* And I indicate as my text this fifth verse of the first chapter of Second Timothy: "I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and, I am persuaded, in thee also."

For without impiety and with no ineptness in any case I might run through all the old families of this community and apply the text with equal fitness to each; The unfeigned faith that dwelt first in thy grandmother Mehetabel and thy mother Eliza; or thy grandmother Anne and thy mother Virginia; or thy grandmother Sophronia and thy mother Josephine; or, taking the male line and beginning with the sturdy old patriarch Nathan Gould, of the fourth generation from Zachehaeus Gould of the Mayflower passenger list, who at the age of 83 made the 600-mile journey from Massachusetts to French Creek—The unfeigned faith that dwelt in thy great-great-grandfather Nathan, thy great-grandfather Nathan, thy grandfather Gilbert and thy father Benjamin.

Ah, it is a great thing to have an unbroken line of ancestors like that—men and women who held to the "Faith once delivered to the Saints"—lived in it, championed it, taught it, died in it! It is an inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away." We can say of these sturdy New England forefathers of French Creek, in a sense and to a degree which can be said of the forebears of few communities, they were "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

I.—We name then, as the first characteristic of those who founded

this church one hundred years ago, *Faith—unfeigned Faith.* There was something simple and downright about it. It was unmixed with sophistry or hypocrisy. It was of genuine stuff—strong and enduring.

It was faith that brought our ancestors from New England to what were then the remote forests clothing the western foothills of the Virginia Alleghenies. The poetic lines of Mrs. Hemans apply not only to the pilgrimage of those who sailed from Holland to Plymouth in the Mayflower, but to the subsequent journeys of their sons and daughters to the Connecticut Valley—to Western Massachusetts, and to Vermont and Connecticut, and thence to Western New York and Ohio, and to Western Virginia:

"What sought they thus afar?
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas; the spoils of war?—
They sought a faith's pure shrine."

By faith Zedekiah Morgan, listening to the stories told by Daniel Stebbins and other promoters, of the sunny, fertile lands of Virginia, left his home in Connecticut and came with his family in 1801 as the first settler to the banks of the Buckhannon near the mouth of French Creek.

By faith Aaron Gould came to the site of French Creek in 1808 and established his righteous seed as the progenitors of a large and pious population. Listen to the Scripture names of his eleven children—Samuel, James, Hannah, Daniel, Ebenezer, Aaron, Lydia, Isabel, Mehetabel, Sarah and Anna.

By faith in 1811 my grandfather, Robert Young, and his brother-in-law, Gilbert Gould, with their numerous children and with others of their kinfolk came from Charlemont in Northwestern Massachusetts in wagons drawn by horses and oxen, and established themselves on Mulberry Ridge a mile or two south of this church. They came at the beginning of that strange series of frosty summers which extended from 1811 to 1816 throughout New England and the State of New York; when frosts occurred every month in the year; when, notably in 1812 and 1816 snow fell in June to a depth of five or six inches, and ice formed on standing pools half an inch thick; when all tender vegetation was frost-bitten, the brilliant leaf-hues of October appeared in July, and the corn and wheat crops failed again and again.

No wonder that our grandparents listened with faith and hope to the tales of land speculators who told of frostless summers and rich, black soil; of noble forests of oak, chestnut, hickory, maple, walnut and cherry, and wide, well watered valleys, where ten acres of rich land could be purchased for the price asked for one of the stony acres of New England. No wonder that family after family of the Morgans, the Goulds, the Youngs, the Phillipses, the Sextons, the Leonards, the Perrys, the Brockses and other names toiled hopefully the hundreds of weary miles to the new land of promise.

They brought their New England piety and faith with them. My

father was a chubby little lad of five years when his father, Robert Young, and his mother, Lydia Gould Young, with their five sons, Pascal, Anson, Gilbert, Festus and Loyal; and their two daughters, Anne and Louisa, made the trip in October and November, 1811, from Charlemont, Mass., to French Creek, Va. Although so young he could remember, or else he had been told them so often that it seemed like memory, many of the incidents of that trip.

They traveled in a covered wagon, drawn by three horses. Father used to tell us that the lead horse was called Old Whitey, and that Loyal and Festus used to gather grass to feed this friendly old nag. Father carried to his grave a scar on one of his fingers made by the teeth of Old Whitey when the little boy's hand went into the horse's mouth with the grass.

Aunt Annie was then a girl of fifteen, and she with her mother and baby Louisa often found shelter at night in the hospitable houses of settlers along the way, while the father and boys slept in the wagon. Many nights, however, they camped together in the woods, making big fires to scare away the panthers and wolves, whose eerie voices could be heard throughout the night.

One fact stood forth always when father told us children the story. Every morning before the journey began and every evening before retiring Robert Young gathered his family around him for a chapter from the Bible and prayer. On Saturday they always camped early, trying to time their journey so as to be near some church where they might all attend Sabbath services. Religion was a very vital thing to the Youngs and the Goulds.

So Robert Young and Gilbert Gould went clear to the end of the forest road and commenced their little clearings on Mulberry Ridge, putting up their log cabins, with the huge stone and mud chimneys at the end, large enough to accommodate big hickory and oak logs which required two men at least to handle them.

From the very first they had religious services every Sabbath day. Robert Young brought some books with him from Massachusetts, including some volumes of sermons, and at the services held in his house and that of Aaron Gould immediately after arriving at French Creek, commenced the custom of reading a sermon to the assembled congregation, a practice which has continued to this day whenever there was no minister. Such sturdy old teachers of orthodoxy as Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Hooker, Thomas Chalmers, Archibald Alexander, Porter, McLeod, and later, John Hall, William Taylor, Charles Spurgeon, Monfort and Gordon have thus moulded the intellectual and spiritual life of this community, and given the services held every Sabbath a consistent dignity and thoughtfulness above those held in almost any other church of any denomination in a radius of at least a hundred and fifty miles.

These weekly meetings with Robert Young as reader were started in the fall of 1811 and were held in his house and that of Aaron Gould. They were the only regular religious meetings held in a very

wide region until the arrival in 1816 of Rev. Asa Brooks. During this shepherdless period this little Puritan flock was visited by only two ordained preachers, both Scotch-Irish Presbyterians from Western Pennsylvania, Rev. Thomas Hunt and Rev. Moses Allen, who each preached one sermon in the house of Aaron Gould. A Presbyterian licentiate, Micaiah Fairfield, who afterwards left the Presbyterian Church and became a Free-Will Baptist, stayed a short time on French Creek.

In 1814 and 1815 came more relatives and friends from Massachusetts—John Loomis, Elijah Phillips and David Phillips, Loomis being then a bachelor, the Phillips brothers having large families. They pushed the road farther south along Mulberry Ridge and towards Centerville, and made clearings.

In 1816, the coldest summer recorded in New England, there fled to sunny Virginia the patriarch of the Goulds, Nathan Gould, 83 years of age, who survived the journey only two weeks, and found his restful grave in the wilderness. He came with his son, Nathan, Jr. Other families came the same year—Jonathan Alden, John Burr, Noah Sexton, Daniel Haines, Ebenezer Leonard and others. They all bought farms in this vicinity, and, almost without exception, reared large families.

But the most notable arrival at French Creek during 1816 was Rev. Asa Brooks, a young Congregational minister, twenty-two years old. He was sent as a missionary into this southern wilderness by the Hampshire County, Mass., Missionary Society, who pledged his support at $400 00 a year, the colony being expected to provide as much of this in various kinds of produce as they could.

Mr. Brooks preached at French Creek, Buckhannon and Beverly, ministering also to new settlements as they arose. After a year's earnest labor he returned to Massachusetts to marry his childhood's friend, Miss Polly Sumner, who returned with him to French Creek in 1818.

The Congregational and Presbyterian Churches had the same system of doctrine, both adhering to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and only differing in their form of government. Therefore, Mr. Brooks followed the almost universal custom at that time of the Congregational ministers who moved into New York, Pennsylvania or Virginia—he became a Presbyterian, uniting with the Presbytery of Redstone in Western Pennsylvania April 20, 1819, and receiving and accepting calls from the, as yet, unorganized congregations of French Creek and Buckhannon.

Mr. Brooks lost no time in perfecting a church organization here. The difficulty of deciding upon the correct month and day for this Centenary Celebration arose from the successive steps of the organization. The call for Mr. Brooks' services was informal. There was no other Presbyterian minister within more than a hundred miles. On July 5, 1819, a meeting of the congregation was held, and Aaron Gould and Robert Young were unanimously elected Elders of the

new church. The organization was completed September 10th at the house of Samuel Gould, on the hill opposite this church.

Listen to the charter membership of this little church in the wilderness—few names, but of great faith—Aaron Gould and Lydia, his wife; Nathan Gould and Esther, his wife; Robert Young and Lydia, his wife; Mrs. Rebecca Morgan, Samuel Gould, Aaron Gould; David Phillips and Anna, his wife; Mrs. Mehetabel Gould, Mrs. Lucy Alden and Mrs. Polly Brooks—fourteen faithful ones.

Of course, God's blessing descended on the infant organization; there was a quiet but genuine revival and eighteen new members were received the next year, all but two on confession of their faith—Capt. Gilbert Gould, Jonathan Alden; Daniel Gould and Margaret, his wife; Pascal Young and Cynthia, his wife; Mrs. Rhoda Gould, Mrs. Esther Gould, Mrs. Nice Gould, Mrs. Mary Knowlton, the Misses Chloe Conkey, Anne Young, Sally Gould, Nancy Gould, Elizabeth Gould and Sarah Peebles; Roswell Knowlton and Prudence, his wife. The membership was now thirty-four, six of whom were still living when my father preached the semi-centenary sermon forty-nine years later.

Mr. Brooks served the church until 1824, when he returned to Massachusetts. That fall the seed sown unsparingly by this good husbandman sprung up into an abundant harvest, and thirty-three new members, among whom were six of Robert Young's family, including my father, were received into the church on confession of their faith. Mr. Brooks returned to French Creek in 1825, residing here until 1831 when he removed to Clarksburg, continuing, however, his pastorate at French Creek until the year of his death in 1834.

The preaching of Mr. Brooks was like almost all of the preaching of that time—severely logical and sternly orthodox, unenlivened by cheerful illustrations or appeals to the emotions. Although my father testified to the keen sense of humor and lively social qualities of his first pastor, yet I suppose that Asa Brooks was never in all his life guilty of exciting a smile in church. One of his grand-nephews, in whose custody are some of Mr. Brooks' manuscripts, furnishes me the following extract from one of his sermons:

"But how can man be profitable unto God? The praises of myriads of men and angels can make no essential addition to His glory. Strictly speaking, He would be as happy and as glorious if the whole human race were punished after the example of the fallen angels as He is at present and ever has been. Even as the sun in the firmament would shine equally bright if this globe, which is illuminated by it, were annihilated. We can neither add to nor detract from God's happiness or glory in the smallest possible degree."

Such hard and cold statements of doctrine are not often heard in the preaching of the present day, and the thought of listening for an hour or more, on a winter Sunday in the old log church, which had no stove or fire place, to a sermon like that would be rather appalling

to the young people of the present generation. But their grandfathers and grandmothers stood it bravely and imbibed from such preaching a firmness of Christian character and an unquestioning faith that their descendents might well imitate.

I would not picture these ancestors of ours as models in all respects nor their customs and beliefs as infallible. They did many foolish things in their daily business and were inconsistant in many ways. Oh! Those priceless walnuts of mighty girth, those bird's-eye and curly maples, those golden oaks, those towering cherry trees and poplars which our grandfathers chopped down, split into rails or burned in log heaps, any one of which, if preserved, would now be worth three or four acres of the land which they were so laborously clearing! And the scrubby native cattle, and ragged sheep, and razorback hogs and domineck chickens, which they were so slow to exchange for the blooded shorthorns and Cotswolds and Berkshires and Plymouth Rocks of the present!

And in matters of religion and morality they seem to us just as inconsistant. How little fellowship there was between the different denominations and how exclusive the various sects! Universal fellowship and brotherhood were comparatively unknown terms. Our ancestors very often seemed to keep their eyes fixed upon what we call now "the infinitely little" to the exclusion of the "weightier matters of the law." Religion was then too often negative—a succession of "Thou shalt nots," rather than any call to the service of God and humanity. Woe to the Elder or Deacon who, on Sunday, with a thunderstorm coming, would gather Widow Smith's hay into her barn to save it! And woe to the boy who, on a hot August Sunday, would dip his melting body in a sheltered pool in French Creek, or the clear, cool waters of the Buckhannon! And yet, on that same Sunday, when Mr. Jones was sick, there would be a long line of neighbors from far and near, sitting on his rail fence or lolling under his trees, discussing every subject on earth except religion; while their wives within the afflicted house were perspiring before the hot fire in the great chimney in their efforts to feed the visiting men. And how instant and severe was the condemnation of the church, sometimes resulting in a trial before the session, if the sprightly young men and women would indulge even in such a romping dance as the Virginia reel; while kissing games were the correct thing, and the usual procedure when young men would call upon young women would be to "sit up" together until late at night in the dark and alone!

These questions of casuistry seem trifling to us now, and the customs of our ancestors provoke a smile. We claim to stand upon a higher plane in these days. We question old doctrines, old methods, old customs; we even criticise Christian, in the Pilgrim's Progress, for leaving his wife and children in the City of Destruction, while he made all haste to escape himself, and thought only of attaining felicity in the Celestial City, regardless of what happened to his family and neighbors.

We question the old creeds and even the Shorter Catechism. I confess that from the age of twelve, when I earned a Brewster Bible by perfectly repeating the Shorter Catechism, I have questioned, with inward shrinking and disapproval some of the answers of that splendid compendium of Christian doctrine.

"God, having out of His mere good pleasure, elected some to everlasting life." I did not like that word *mere*, and I don't yet. It seems to present my Infinite Father in a hard, selfish, unfeeling light.

And that first question and answer—

"What is man's chief end?"

"Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever."

What has man's *enjoyment* of God or anything earthly to do with his christian life as a motive? Is he to become a Christian simply to go to heaven? I have always felt like reversing that answer by saying:

"Man's chief end is to glorify God by serving his fellowmen."

In many respects I think we do stand on a higher plane in these days. And we should. In the universal progress that this age is making is there not a progress of christian doctrine as well as of christian life? Are we not getting nearer the Christly example of sacrifice and service? Shall we take as our example that saintly divine, Jonathan Edwards, who said:

"Henceforth my one object in life is to save my soul."

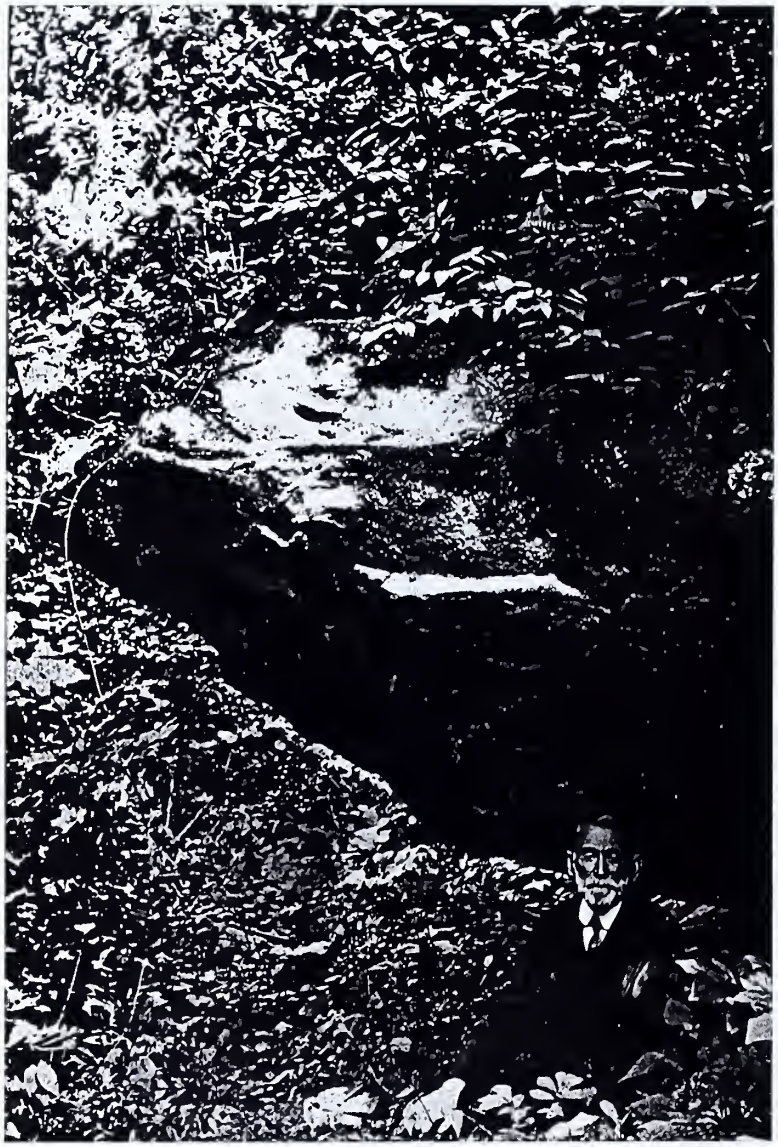
Shall we not rather adopt the impassioned exclamation of the young soldier in a hospital in France last year, when witnessing the agony of fifty of his comrades who, gassed by German fiends, were struggling, gasping and dying for twenty-four hours before death relieved their sufferings, he exclaimed in anguish, "Oh, Christ, who died for men, would that I could go through all this once for all for these other fellows!"

We are, I think, learning more and more the Christlike beauty of self-forgetfulness, and are making salvation not a matter of selfish fears and hopes, but a question of saving others. We are learning this, I think, more perfectly than our fathers could. We no longer try to scare and coax men into heaven.

But in this respect of *faith* I believe we are far behind our ancestors who founded this church in the wilderness. Many incidents crowd upon my memory to illustrate this. Let me select one or two.

My father, when a child, had been taught that if he wished anything he should pray for it, and that God answered all worthy prayers. Our grandfathers and grandmothers made little of the festival of Christmas, regarding it as a relic of barbarism or as a Popish institution. And that was also prior to the universal observance of Thanksgiving Day. New Year's Day was the great festival of the year—that and the Fourth of July. On New Years the scattered members of the family all came home, and there was feating and rejoicing and merriment.

The Youngs were no hunters. They left that duty to the Phillips



¶ Dr. S. Hall Young seated beneath the rock where his father prayed for a New Year's dinner and received a wild turkey.

tribe, although almost the only meat they ate was wild game with, now and then, a chicken, or a lamb from the flock. Grandfather Young and his family depended on their neighbors for their venison and other game. Robert Young was so tenderhearted that he could not wield the rod upon his own children, but left that duty entirely to his wife. He would not kill anything except snakes, and did that from a sense of duty, quoting Scripture:

"The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

My own father would never kill a chicken, and when we brought to him our bloody toes or fingers he would sometimes faint away. So, although deer, rabbits, wild turkeys and pheasants abounded on Big and Little Bushrun, the Young family often went hungry in the midst of plenty. There came a New Year's eve when the family was gathering together. My Uncle Pascal and his wife were coming and other friends, and there was nothing provided for the New Year's dinner. Grandmother was in distress and voiced her perplexities in the presence of her children.

Loyal, then about ten years old, listened and quietly stole out of the house and into the woods to the base of a great oak tree, where there was a shelving rock where he used to retire for study and prayer. He knelt and prayed most earnestly that the Lord would send to the Young family a New Year's dinner. He had not risen from his knees when he heard a great thrashing and flopping among the branches of the big oak, and down at his feet fluttered a big twenty-pound turkey gobbler.

Joyfully he seized his prize, and although he could hardly carry the magnificent bird, he lugged it up to the cabin and burst in upon his mother, crying, "Here it is, your New Year's dinner. I prayed for it and the Lord sent it."

When they examined the bird they found a bullet hole, but were never able to discover the far-away hunter that had shot and wounded it.

When I was a boy my father often used to tell us of this answer to prayer, and my Uncle Anson confirmed the incident, both accepting it, without question, as a direct answer to the boy's petition.

Another instance of "unfeigned faith": My grandfather was poor. Somehow, the Youngs, as a tribe, have never been what the people here call "forehanded." Uncle Edwin Phillips had a dry, and sometimes caustic wit. He it was who, when provoked by some acts of the storekeepers of French Creek village, dubbed it Snatchburg—a name which stuck for a generation or two. He married father's youngest sister, dear, gentle Aunt Phronie. Once when somebody (I think it was one of the thrifty Goulds) was speaking slightingly of the Youngs and their incapacity for money-making, Uncle Ed quietly remarked, "Well, I reckon you'll find that they'll all git to heaven."

Grandfather was a good carpenter, as well as a farmer, and worked at his trade. He was magistrate, and cases were brought to him for trial from far and near. He was county assessor for Lewis County--

then very large—and traveled from one end of it to the other on foot, assessing and collecting taxes. He was once elected to the most lucrative office in the county, that of sheriff. He ought to have been well off. But he was too soft-hearted. He was reported to have sometimes himself paid the fines he imposed as magnistrate when he thought the culprit unable to comply with the law. In like manner he would pay the taxes of poor people rather than collect from them. And he surrendered the office of sheriff because he feared that he might have to execute some criminal.

So he was poor, in spite of his popularity and industry. When successive claimants to his land won their cases in the courts, he would pay again for his farm rather than fight the case. His boys and girls handled no money. In fact, very little currency changed hands in this region. Commodities and services were bartered in kind. The wage for a day's work in the harvest field was fifty cents, payable in produce.

Therefore when Festus and Loyal were approaching manhood and were crazy for an education, their father could not help them. Grandmother, who was a wonderful woman, self-educated, taught her children the common branches. Then their pastor, Asa Brooks, started them in Latin, Greek and algebra. Both boys desired to study for the ministry.

They had no money to buy books. They walked up to a slate quarry on the Little Kanawha and manufactured their own slates and soapstone pencils. Mr. Brooks loaned them books and they took turns in studying them. He pondered their case with deep sympathy. Then he called them together into his study.

"Boys," he said, "a college and seminary education is very expensive. Your father can help you but little. I see my way clear to assist one of you to an education, if the other will work with all his might for his brother and give up all hope of education for himself. Choose between you which shall go to college."

Immediately, with that spirit of self-abnegation which was their strongest characteristic, each began to urge the claims of the other. When he saw that a decision was impossible in that way, Mr. Brooks said, "I see that this is a matter for the Lord to decide. Let us ask His guidance."

Kneeling, he prayed earnestly that God would show whom He had chosen for His ministry. Then, quoting the text, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal thereof is with the Lord," he wrote "go" on one slip of paper, "stay" on the other, and had the lads draw. The lot fell on the younger. Loyal was the Lord's choice.

The boys began to plan and work to get him ready. They gathered piles of pineknots for light to study by. Grandmother moulded candles of deer's tallow and wild beeswax. She raised flax and prepared, spun and wove it for Loyal's shirts and towels. She and Sister Annie spun wool and knit it for his socks, and wove it into jeans and flannels

for his clothes. A cowhide, tanned in the little French Creek tannery, furnished his shoes. Annie, said to have been a very beautiful girl, and certainly in her seventies the handsomest old lady I ever saw, taught the first school on French Creek and gave of her scanty salary.

But Festus and Loyal themselves earned the most of the money necessary to pay the first year's expenses at Jefferson College. They took the most available means. In Uncle Ed's phrase, they "went asangin". There has been from time immemorial a steady demand in China for that strange aromatic root of the forest called ginseng. The Celestials use it as a general cure-all, although white doctors have never discovered its medicinal value. The Young boys couldn't shoot, but they could dig ginseng. They worked hard and saved, the whole community helping, and so it came about that Loyal, after a year or two of preparation, was able to start one morning from the home cabin, his old carpet bag containing his scanty wardrobe slung over his shoulder, his precious shoes in his hand, and enough money to pay a year's tuition in his pocket. He has told me that that barefoot walk of two hundred miles to Canonsburg was the happiest trip of his life. He felt himself dedicated by French Creek to the glad work of preaching the Gospel. He couldn't sing, but the aisles of the forest rang with his shouts as he spun the miles behind him.

That same simple faith remained in him and his kinfolk here through all their lives, and some of those present this morning remember the time of summer drought fifty years ago when the congregation assembled at father's call under a hot cloudless sky, to pray for rain; and he and my sister, and I think some others, *took their big umbrellas with them.* The sequel that they were needed very soon did not surprise these men and women of faith. They prayed, *believing.*

We of this matter-of-fact age may well ask, "What has become of this simple and direct faith of our fathers?" I tell you, my kinsfolk, we do not possess it. Whatever we may have that they lacked, we have lost our firm grip on God's promises. Let us study, imitate, *get back to it.*

II.—The courage, fidelity and integrity of our fathers were no less conspicuous than their faith. Indeed they may be said to have been the natural result of it. One of the first material results of the "faith that worketh by Love" was the first house of worship, built of logs, just in front of this building. It was erected about the year 1823. The people simply got together and put it up. In their own saw mill they sawed the lumber necessary for the floors, pews, window sash and doors. At the "raising" the usual custom was observed of handing about to the workmen the jug of genuine, pure whiskey. One of the young men stood far out on the end of the collar beam and drank to the prosperity of the new church. Nothing incongruous in this act was seen by the assembled congregation. It was the inevitable custom of the day.

The only money needed in the erection of this building was for the

purchase of nails and glass. The ladies of the congregation solved the problem. From their own fields they reaped the flax, hackled it, spun it and wove a great web of linen. Augustus W. Sexton (Uncle Gusty, as we afterwards called him) took the linen to Frazier's store, near Stanton, 150 miles, and brought two boxes of glass and a keg of nails, packing these on his horse and himself walking back the whole distance. There was no chimney or fireplace in the church, and stoves were not yet invented. Therefore in winter the people shivered in their seats through the long sermons read or delivered. But they *came*. Every Sabbath they were there, with a fidelity to duty altogether admirable.

I think we can boldly say that French Creek was the most progressive community in the State of Virginia and one of the most forward in the whole United States. The sermons of Asa Brooks may seem very stern and even medieval, but really they were ahead of the times. Mr. Brooks was a leader of his age and his people followed him closely.

This progressive, courageous spirit had its expression along several lines. First, the community, although in the heart of the slave state, was openly and boldly anti-slavery. Whether the "Underground Railroad" had a station on French Creek I am not able to say, but I have heard hints of its existence. These New Englanders were outspoken in their abhorrence of slavery at the time when to voice such a sentiment was perilous. In 1856, when the great issue was coming to a head and General John C. Fremont, the Pathfinder, was nominated for President on the "Free Soil" ticket, the only votes cast for Fremont in that region were ten polled on French Creek. It is worth while to record here the names of these brave and conscientious citizens. They were Dr. Amos Brooks, Alva Brooks, John Phillips, Jason Loomis, Franklin Phillips, Gilbert Young, Adolphus Brooks, William Loomis, David Phillips and J. T. Brooks. To show what it meant thus to stand against the universal sentiment of the State I quote a paragraph from an editorial published December 1, 1856, in the Herald, of Weston, Lewis County. The heading of the editorial was "Infamous":

> "We regret, deeply regret, that there should be in our midst those who sympathize with a sectional party in the North, whose greatest ambition is to encroach upon our institutions, and who, in the madness of their fanatic hate, stealthily seek to jeopardize a property guaranteed to us as sacredly by the Constitution, as is the right to them and to us of worshipping God according to the dictates of our own conscience. They have the impudence, the brazen-faced effrontery, here in Virginia, to speak their odious and seditious sentiments through the ballot box, and attempt to infuse their abolition poison into the minds of our people."

Dr. Amos Brooks, the father of Adolphus, replied to the editorial in part as follows:

> "A few weeks ago I was shown an editorial in your dirty sheet with the word 'Infamous' for a caption. Are you too thick-skulled to know that if the freedom of speech, and of the press, and of the ballot box, is taken from the people, then there can be no republicanism? But it seems you are striving to have it so. Are you then not a traitor? If so, do you not deserve the fate of traitors? If Arnold deserved to be shot, do you not deserve to be hung?"

We do not have any record of this letter being published in the Herald, but the incident shows something of the courage of this little New England community in what was then the heart of the South.

It is appropriate to speak here a word about that great man and great physician, Dr. Amos Brooks. He was forced into the profession by the needs of the community and for about forty years was the only resident physician of French Creek. His practice extended many miles in every direction and he often spent days and nights with his patients, nursing the sick, administering medicines and offering words of Christian consolation to the suffering and dying. Many times he cooked the food for convalescents and made coffins for the dead. At one time he made forty trips on horseback to attend a sick fellow physician at Clarksburg, each round trip covering eighty miles. For his services and the total distance of 3,200 miles traveled he observed the professional courtesy and made no charge.

At the election of 1860 French Creek went almost solidly for Abraham Lincoln. And when the Civil War broke out five or six times as many Union soldiers went from Upshur County as those who joined the Southern Army.

French Creek was always steadfastly loyal in the war of 1812. although the settlement was very raw, new and scattered. A number of the settlers joined the American Army for the defense of our northern frontiers. Capt. Gilbert Gould, Daniel Gould and Aaron Gould were of the number.

One of the first Bible Societies of the State was organized on French Creek as early as 1829. In the Semi-Centennial sermon occurs this paragraph:

> "A letter from my father, Mr. Robert Young, dated October 10, 1830, says:
>
> "The Bible cause prospers here. I found that there were about 380 families destitute of the Bible when I took in the property of Lewis County (as assessor) last spring. We have passed a vote to endeavor to supply this county by the first of next March. Festus Young is corresponding secretary of the Bible Society here. He received a letter by the last mail from the City

of New York, informing him that they had lately sent on 300 Bibles, which, with those sent before, make nearly 450, besides 200 Testaments."

Grandfather seems to have combined his office of assessor of Lewis County, of which Upshur was then a part, with that of Colporteur, taking a bunch of Bibles with him for sale or free distribution whenever he went upon his public duties. (I wonder what would be said if the present assessor of Upshur County would pursue the same course?) Who can measure the influence of this early Bible Society upon the then rather godless region?

A still more remarkable evidence of the progressive character of French Creek is shown in the fact that here was organized one of the first (if not the very first) Total Abstinence Societies in the United States. I quote again from the Semi-Centennial sermon:

"A temperance society was organized about the first of October, 1828, 'on principles of total abstinence from ardent spirits, except as a medicine.' At the first meeting 26 males and 27 females put their names to the temperance pledge. A letter from Mr. Brooks to the speaker says: 'Our constitution prohibits selling and distilling ardent spirits. All who joined, I think, were actuated by a correct principle, which leads me to hope they will be true and faithful to the cause.' Nearly a year afterwards, Mr. Uriah Phillips wrote to me as follows: 'That deadly curse, Intemperance, has taken up its march, and made a rapid retreat from this settlement. Some would stop the progress, but in so doing they only expose their weakness and help the cause. The Temperance Society here has exceeded the expectations of every one. I believe that there is not one-tenth the spirits consumed here that there has formerly been'."

Father does not go quite far enough in this passage. In Montgomery's "Leading Facts of American History" occurs the following:

"In 1826, the 'American Society for the Promotion of Temperance' was formed in Boston; and a number of years later (1840) six men, who knew the evils of the vice of intemperance from their own sad personal experience, met in Baltimore, signed a total-abstinence pledge, and founded the 'Washingtonian Temperance Society'."

A footnote adds: "The first temperance societies did not insist on total abstinence from all alcoholic drinks, but only from the use of distilled spirits, such as whiskey, brandy and the like. Later, they required—like the Washingtonians—a pledge of '*total*' abstinence from all that can intoxicate."

It is more than probable that to French Creek belongs the proud distinction of *leading the whole United States* in the Total Abstinence

Movement. For many of the founders of this church, in spite of the fact noted above that there was liquor at the church raising, never knew the taste of whiskey.

But the intellectual and moral pre-eminence of French Creek from its first settlement has made it conspicuous in county and state. The colony brought books with them, and this has always been a *reading* community. From Martin's Gazetteer of Virginia and The District of Columbia, published in 1835, we take this paragraph: "On the banks of the creek is situated French Creek settlement, comprizing about eight miles square, containing 66 scattered dwellings, occupied by an industrious and enterprising people, who have imigrated from the New England States within the last fifteen (should be twenty-five) years. There is one house of worship (Presbyterian), one tanyard, a number of wheelrights, house carpenters, cabinet makers and joiners, and one temperance society, one tract and one Bible society. The principal pursuit of the people is agriculture. The settlement is divided into five school districts where the common branches of English education are taught six months in the year; the state of education being far superior to that which exists in the country adjacent. Population, 400."

The reasons for this pre-eminence in education were many, but I think the principle one has been an educated ministry. The center of the community's life was this church, and it was open every Sabbath, and its ministers were all educated in college and theological seminary. Listen to the splendid roll: Asa Brooks, Ezekiel Quillin, Edward Brooks, Ebenezer Churchill, Enoch Thomas, James Young, Orr Lawson, C. P. French, C. S. Faris, Loyal Young, Calvin C. Gould, George M. Fleming, William O. Phillips, Julius Spencer, E. P. Sloan, W. J. Hazlett, C. L. Luther and A. C. Powell. Ministerial students who have from time to time supplied the church are S. Hall Young, L. A. Lindemuth, Basil R. King, J. W. Kirke, Earle A. Brooks, David Graham, Frank B. Llewellyn, Roy F. Miller and W. H. Lyon. In addition to these, Dr. Asabel Bronson and Dr. Elias Bronson often preached for the congregation during the absence of a regular minister.

And in the frequent intervals when the church was without a pastor a stately procession of eminent divines uttered their great thoughts here through the lips of such appreciative readers as Robert Young, Festus Young, W. O. Phillips, Marshall P. Wingrove and Fred E. Brooks.

The pastors taught some of the higher branches to the most promising young people and started them on their way through college. French Creek furnished many school teachers for the schools of Upshur and the surrounding counties. The sons of the old families began to find their way to Washington, Jefferson, Marietta, Wooster, and West Virginia State colleges, and the daughters to Steubenville, Washington and Oxford.

Soon after the war Miss Myra Brooks opened a select school on French Creek where many of us got our first real start towards a Christian education; and in 1871 the French Creek Institute was

founded and a building erected. The first principal was Dr. Loyal Young, and Miss Myra Brooks, J. Loomis Gould, Rhoda Gould, R. A. Armstrong and S. Hall Young were among his successors. This academy taught a full high-school course, and its influence was strongly Christian. Many of the pupils, who came for the light of knowledge, found here also the "Light that lighteth every man."

I hear, with surprise and disappointment, that French Creek has of late somewhat fallen away from the high intellectual standard which distinguished it in former days, and that recently a proposition to establish a high school here was voted down. Let us hope that the community will "repent and do the first works," and take again the position that rightly belongs to it—that of the leading community of the State in education and religion.

My address is already too long, and yet many points omitted crowd upon my memory. Of *Patriotism*—One of the old settlers, David Phillips, gave twenty sons and grandsons to the Union Army during the Civil War, and a very large quota of the young men of French Creek went as officers and soldiers to the cause of Universal Freedom in the World War.

Of *Temperance*—The only attempt ever made to start a saloon on French Creek came to a speedy ending, when the indignant citizens assembled at night and threw all the gathered materials into the creek; and when, in 1912, a prohibition amendment to the State Constitution was submitted to the vote of the people, there were cast at French Creek 251 votes for and only 8 votes against the amendment.

Of *Education and Religion*—French Creek has produced more physicians, teachers and preachers, in proportion to its population, than any other community in the State.

The foundations of intellectual, moral and spiritual greatness were laid broad and deep by these sturdy ancestors of ours. The thrifty and steady Goulds, the gentle and pious Youngs, the patriotic and venturesome Phillipses, the industrious and reliable Sextons and Morgans, the intellectual and studious Brookses, these, and other no less worthy names of our ancestors, call to us through the peaceful and troubled years of their history to emulate their virtues, and above all, to have abiding in us, controlling us, developing us, the *unfeigned faith that dwelt* in our grandmothers and our mothers; our grandfathers and our fathers.

Let us take for our own again the closing words of my father, Loyal Young, in his Semi-Centennial sermon:

> "It is ours to work for the future as our fathers worked for us. They laid foundations; let us rear the superstructure, and the topstone shall be laid with shoutings "Grace, grace unto it!" At some future day, on the sunny plains of Paradise, we may be permitted to look down upon our work still carried on in this place by other hands; and give God the praise that we were permitted to take a humble place in its advancement."

THE HOME OF OUR FATHERS

By REV. EARLE A. BROOKS, D. D.

FOR a hundred years and more the theme of many a discussion and of interesting comment has been the old home in New England from which many of our ancestors came. Our fathers and mothers, our grandparents and others whose memories extended far into the past have entertained the young folks with many stories of the old home from which they made a long journey into the wilderness to establish a new home. Throughout the century just coming to a close the young people of French Creek have talked and dreamed concerning the land, far to the north, from which their fathers came. To a number of you who are present this afternoon has come the privilege of visiting the New England States and of seeing the very places in which our parents and grandparents lived. To me has come the pleasant duty of speaking especially of this home of our fathers.

In some of our historical records, such as Dr. Loyal Young's famous sermon on "Fifty Years in the Wilderness" and in various papers published at the time of the recent French Creek Home Coming, as well as in various addresses that have been made during this Centennial of the French Creek Church, such places as Dedham, Weymouth, Ashfield and Brookfield, Massachusetts; Halifax, Vermont, and various localities in Connecticut and elsewhere in New England have been mentioned. Frequent reference has been made to Charlemont, Mass., as that is the little town from which the Goulds and Youngs started on their long journey into the wilderness. As Charlemont is the place of greatest importance to this assembly as a whole, since some one of the ancestors of almost all who are present today came from this beautiful town, I shall speak of it as typical of the rest and describe it in some detail.

Charlemont is located in the northwestern part of Massachusetts, a little east of the Hoosac Mountains, in a most beautiful section of the famous Berkshires. In sight of the hills near Charlemont is Greylock, the most famous of the Berkshire peaks. Through the Hoosac Mountains passes the Hoosac Tunnel, the longest tunnel in America. Near it are still to be seen most beautiful forests and, not far away, flows the Deerfield River. The scenery is most inspiring and the young men and young women there must be constantly thrilled with the most noble thoughts that such surroundings suggest. I have thought that the love for the forest that has been present in the lives of so many of our French Creek people must have come as an inherited instinct from the impressions made upon our fathers in beautiful Charlemont many years ago. As is true of almost all New England villages, Charlemont is a quiet place with broad streets that are bordered with giant elm trees.

Far back from the street, with broad green yards in front, stand the neat houses as white as snow. As I passed through the streets of Charlemont a few weeks ago I was impressed with its quiet beauty, and strange thoughts of boys and girls, who walked through those streets many years ago, came to my mind. I might have sought out old tombstones in the cemetery or looked for the old homestead of Henry Young and his wife Lydia Ross Young, who were the parents of Robert Young, or I might have had strange visions of an oldtime wedding journey as Nathan Gould with his bride Martha Gilbert made their way from Brookfield, a little to the south, to their new home in Charlemont. I might have sought to conjure up the past, but I preferred to look, the little while I had, at the hills, fields, forests and rivers that surrounded the little New England village in which a sturdy race developed long ago and sent out their sons and daughters to occupy new lands to the south and west.

Many pages might be written concerning the beauties of the New England States and concerning the children of Pilgrim fathers who inherited strong bodies, strong minds and honest souls from their Puritan ancestry. But these things are known to all of us and may be read in the many books that speak of these interesting subjects.

As we think of the environment that surrounded the lives and the homes of our fathers in Rhode Island, Vermont, Connecticut and Massachusetts, we wonder why they left the old home to seek a new home in some wilderness. I have sought here to give some reasons for this change of earthly dwelling place.

There were certain influences that entered into the lives of the New England people at the beginning of the last century that had much to do with their selection of new homes in distant places. Of these I shall speak briefly.

I.—CLIMATIC CONDITIONS.

Near the time when many of the old families left New England there were two very cold summers—1812 and 1816—which greatly discouraged the people of that region. No doubt they had longings for a more congenial climate and, as soon as opportunity came, they started on a great southward migration.

II.—ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

Some one has recently written of this period as follows: "People were migrating from the eastern States into the new land, prompted by the hard times following the Revolution and the disturbed conditions connected with the War of 1812. Profiteering was then in vogue in the East. Prices were prohibitive. Flour was $17.00 a barrel; salt was $5.00 a bushell; sugar was 30 cents a pound; molasses was $2.00 a gallon. The new West was the hope of the people." Finding conditions of life hard to bear the men and women of real spirit sought for a home where they might produce new conditions more to their liking—

where they might produce more food, make their own clothes, build their own homes, clear out their own farms, and thus be independent of old conditions that had been a hindrance to them.

III.—THE SPIRIT WITHIN THEM.

We must bear in mind that these men and women were descendants of the Pilgrim fathers. In their veins coursed the blood of heroes, of Puritans, of travelers of that race which has always pressed on toward the most western horizon of the world. In those days there was much travel. The love of discovery and conquest was warm within the hearts of men. Of this period the historian Elson says—

Quotation from Elson's History of the U. S., Vol. III., page 96.

"A wonderful movement of the population to the west began soon after the war with England had closed. Every road leading westward from the east was covered with lines of moving wagons, plodding their weary way over hills and mountains, streams and valleys. At Haverhill, Mass., 450 emigrants passed through the town in 13 days. At Easton, Pa., 511 wagons, bearing over 3,000 persons, passed in one month. These were moving to the great valley of the Ohio River, and in the south a similar movement to the new States of Alabama and Mississippi was going on.

"A farmer wishing to better his worldly condition would sell all his goods that he could not take with him, and provide himself with a strong, light wagon, covered with canvas. In this he would pack his goods, leaving only room enough for himself and his family. Thus equipped they would bid adieu to their old neighbors, friends, and kindred, often to meet them no more in this life, and started out upon the long and toilsome journey of hundreds of miles through the wilderness. Sometimes whole communities went together and settled in the same neighborhood in the west; but more frequently they moved by isolated families. Arriving in the western wilderness, the pioneers would purchase a quarter-section of land of the Government, of some land company, or of some settler who had preceded him and failed, paying two or three dollars an acre, on the installment plan. If the lands were wholly unimproved, the family would live in the moving wagon until a cabin could be built. The cabin was made of logs, notched at the end so as to fit at the corners, and laid one after another until the house was about ten feet high. There was but one room, one door, and one window. The door was made of rough boards swung on leather hinges, and opposite the door was left an open space on the ground for a fire-place, the chimney being built outside of flat sticks like laths, and plastered with mortar. The floor was made of planks hewn out with the ax, and the roof of lighter planks resting on rafters made of saplings. In such a home many a good family lived for ten or twenty years, the ancestors of many of the leading men of the nation today. The cabin built, the pioneer would begin battling with the forest, clearing a few acres each year, carrying his grain perhaps 20

Group of Visitors listening to one of the Speakers

miles on horseback to the nearest mill. Soon his land would become more productive; and at length, if thrifty and industrious, he would build a good house and abondon the cabin. Other movers would settle near, then a town would be founded, and another, and another, and eventually a railroad would be built through the new settlement. The community is transformed in 25 years; the markets are near, the comforts of life have multiplied, the farm of the first settler is now worth thousands of dollars, and he has added other hundreds of acres to it. His children settled on the farm or enter the business or the professional world, and the old settler spends his declining years amid peace and plenty; and he gathers his grandchildren about him and tells of the days of long ago, of the long journey in the moving wagon, and of the time when the forest frowned on every side and the wolves howled about his lonely cabin in the wilderness." Many new colonies were established in the early part of the last century in northern New York, in Ohio, in West Virginia and in other parts of the south and west. The same spirit that has caused the star of empire to move westward caused the brave men of New England to come to the forests of Virginia and to establish new homes here.

IV.—THE RELIGIOUS IMPULSE.

In a little town that lies a few miles west of Charlemont, Massachusetts—not many miles away—is to be found a curious looking marble monument. It is in the form of a hay-stack and is placed at this particular point in Williamstown to commemorate the far-famed Haystack Prayer Meeting that marked the beginning of a great new era in foreign missions in America and throughout the world. At the place where this hay-stack of marble now stands there once stood a real haystack and by its side, a little more than 100 years ago, a small group of young men who were students in Williams College met and began to pray for the conversion of the world. Among these young men was Samuel J. Mills who planned to go as a foreign missionary, but was hindered from doing so. However, he began to work for the publishing of the Gospel in America and started on a long journey to the south-west. On one of his first trips, almost 100 years ago, he came to Marietta, Ohio, and established a religious association. Later he organized a number of Presbyterian churches in various parts of the west. In reading, very recently, copies of THE PANOPLIST published in 1811 and 1812, I have noted the deep religious zeal of the Church at this time. The same spirit that sent Samuel Mills to the West, Judson to India and Eliott to the Indians sent Asa Brooks to the new colony here at French Creek, and impelled Robert Young to distribute more than 300 Bibles to families in Lewis County that were without the Scriptures. It is exceedingly interesting to note that, though many of the families and the ministers as well were members of the Congregational Church at the time of their departure from New England they almost invariably organized Presbyterian Churches in their

new homes. So it was at French Creek and so it was in many other similar colonies farther to the north and west.

V.—COMMERCIAL INFLUENCE.

As many of the records show there were certain men such as Patrick Peebles and Dr. Stebbins who took up large tracts of land at the very beginning of the last century here in this part of Virginia. No doubt they sought to dispose of their valuable land-holdings and used many arguments to induce emigration in the direction of their tracts of land. Many were persuaded to buy lands here and, of course, came later to enter upon their new possessions. The commercial influence was a large factor in the new settlements in the French Creek region a century ago.

VI.—THE GEOGRAPHICAL INFLUENCE.

At the time of which I speak the Indian menace had almost ceased and the roads and trails over which the red men had traveled for centuries uncounted were taken by the men of pale face and used by them as great thoroughfares. Indians' trails led to the north, the west and the south and it was possible for white men to travel far over these forest roads formerly used by the wild men and wild animals. Among these trails one of the most noted is the Mohawk trail leading from a certain point in Massachusetts westward along the northern border of that State, through the entire length of New York to Niagara Falls. This being open to white men in the last years of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century many men sought to follow it into the wilds. The colonies of Yankees that settled in northern New York and in northern Ohio followed the Mohawk Trail. Along this trail went Samuel J. Mills on horseback as he began his notable missionary career and hundreds of others, singly or in large or small groups followed in the same way. We have evidences that some turned southward and followed along the Ohio River at a very early day, while others took a trail leading up towards the head-waters of our own Monongahela. Though we do not know certainly, it seems probable that our fathers traveled along the above route for at least part of the way.

There may have been other influences that led our fathers to leave the old home even as Abram left Ur of the Chaldees and journeyed into the promised land. We do not know. Yet it must be true that the influences which I have mentioned were very powerful in inducing our old New England ancestors to forsake the old home, to ride through a perilous wilderness and to endure the privations of a pioneer life. Men, women and children of all ages came on this journey. Their courage in making such a venture must have been very great. Their character may be well described in the words of Mrs. Hemans:

"There was woman's fearless eye
Lit by her deep love's truth;
There was manhood's brow serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth."

MORGAN, BROOKS, WINGROVE.

And so they came, young men and old; women of dauntless daring and of unsullied souls; little children who later became the fathers and mothers of those who are now with us, adding the glory of their pure lives to this occasion.

The old home among the granite rocks, the birch-covered hills and blue lakes of New England was very beautiful. But our fathers forsook that home to seek, in the spirit of true Christian crusaders, a new home farther away. Here among our own West Virginia hills they chose to end their pilgrimage and to build for themselves and their children churches, schools and homes. They laid well the foundations of their new home. They built a Church which is as a city set upon a hill whose light can not be hid. They built character which is as strong as the rocks of the old northern home. Here our fathers came, lived, did their work. The ashes of their earthly tabernacles lie near the place where we stand today while their spirits have gone on to the eternal dwelling place.

One of the most touching incidents in the life of Jesus took place near the close of his life. He was down in Judea, away from the home of his childhood in the hills of Galilee. In talking with his friends one day he said, "But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee." His thoughts turned to his old home and to the associations of his boyhood days. Immediately after his resurrection he went before them into Galilee. The great battle of the world had been fought; the powers of sin were vanquished on the Cross. Then the Saviour returned for a little while to his old home, the place that he loved so well.

So our minds turn again to some old home—New England, French Creek—somewhere. But so transient are the years, so shifting are the sands upon which we build our homes that we often turn to the future and think of the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

But I would leave in your minds at the close of these wonderful days not one sordid thought, not one sad reflection. The old home in New England had its severities, its discipline, its beauty; the future home to which we all journey has its indescribable glories. But, Oh, Thank God for French Creek, the present home of so many of us, its traditions, its influence, its future! Be glad in the joy of living today and of having at least a little share in the work of this our old Home Church.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DR. WARREN H. WILSON

REV. ROY F. MILLER

A SOLDIER'S GOD

By REV. ROY F. MILLER

INTRODUCTION

MY subject is "A Soldier's God." The text begins with the words "In the beginning" and ends with the words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints." Or speaking plainly the entire Bible is the basis of my remarks.

I have called the God of whom I speak a Soldier's God because he first appeared in the way I shall describe, to a soldier. However, the God of the soldier was not much different than the God of any other Christian. Soldiers didn't have any more religion than the pals they left at home. Here and there, of course, there were short bursts of religious zeal, but on the whole the boy who went away with good tendencies found his level and the boy who went away with bad tendencies found his. The same faces appeared in the Bible classes; the same were seen in the gang. And when they came home you had just about what you sent, only more decided one way or another.

I.—THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER FORCED TO DECIDE.

Certainly the Christian boy came home more decided. Before, his religion had been taken care of by some one else, just the same as his meals had been prepared or his clothes washed. Sunday morning came and mother would call upstairs, "Tom, get up! It's time for Sunday School." Tom would grunt, "All right," and roll over on the other side. After a couple more calls he would get up and go to Sunday School. There he would listen to some predigested religious thought that some teacher had laboriously sweated over. Tom agreed to everything that was said and at the end of the hour went home feeling that his Christian duty was done. Oh, perhaps he went to another service or so during the day and listened to somebody else think for him, but poor Tom never once thought for himself. So long as he kept in the shadow of the church and enjoyed people's respect, everything was all right. His mind was filled with a jumble of religious ideas that he didn't care to unravel. He couldn't tell you why he was a Christian; he couldn't tell you what Christ was; he couldn't tell you the meaning of salvation; he couldn't tell you what the cross stood for.

But there came a time when the church no longer towered over Tom and rang its bell. There came a time when there was no voice to call him. There probably wasn't even a church or Bible class to go to. Tom was left standing on his own feet. For the first time in his life he had to decide whether religion was worth sticking to, whether the parson at home was right, whether Christ could mean anything to a soldier and a multitude of other questions.

And these had to be decided under new circumstances. There

were no books, no home helps—only his companions around him and God's blue sky above. Oh, how he revelled in that starlit sky when his work was done and he could walk and let his mind rise above the petty things of the day and wander to the very limits of the universe itself. It was there under the spell of this greatness that he resolved to hold to the old religion.

II.—THE SOLDIER FINDS THAT A MAN'S IDEALS ARE HIS RELIGION.

But his companions—there was the puzzle. Why did they give so little heed to religion? Not many of them cared for it or wanted to be classed as religious. Yet there wasn't a one in the crowd that didn't have some good about him—no matter how bad he might be in other ways. There, for instance, was Jim; Jim, who had served two hitches in the cavalry and still cursed like a trooper. But Jim had a heart as big as himself and had actually cried when the parson back home had sent him a letter. To be sure they all had their high ideals in one way or another.

Yet when Tom invited Bob to church, Bob said he didn't care to go. He didn't believe a man had to go in order to be good. He never went and still he always acted square with everyone. He always gave a man a fair deal. He prided himself on being square and in that Tom suddenly discovered lay Bob's religion. To Bob it was the big thing in life. He lived by it. He liked men who lived by it. He even based his claim to eternity upon it: "Fair play" was the creed of his religion and his God's chief characteristic was squareness with men.

Nor was Bob different than the others. Tom suddenly found that all his companions had religion of one kind or another. This one prided himself because he had quit drinking. Self-control was the big thing in life to him. His God was a God of self-control. He had no need of church because some church members were not as strong as he. This one prided his kindness. No one ever asked him for anything he had and didn't get it. He had the reputation of giving his last cent and was always broke because other people borrowed. Bigness of heart was the important thing in life for him. His God was a God of kindness and he had no need of church because some church members were miserly. And so it went. They each had some high ideal they clung to. They each had a religion.

III.—THE SOURCE AND NATURE OF THESE IDEALS.

But the regret of it was, Christ was left out. It wouldn't have been so bad if Bob had thought squareness was the big thing in life and had taken Christ as the best example of a square man. Instead he had merely a respect for Christ and the captain was the man he idolized. Hadn't he treated them as man to man and put them on their own honor? Hadn't he been alike to all of them and played no

favorites? Who would you want squarer than he? Bob had other idols, too. He often spoke of this or that man and admired him because he was square, but the crooked councilman and politicians he couldn't bear. And so it was with the other men of the company. Each had his religion, and the center of it was Christ or somebody else.

Among such a variety of religion Tom naturally found a difference of opinion as to what was right or wrong. There was Bill, who believed it was all right to steal if he could get away with it. There was Harry, who thought it was all right to swear if it wasn't overdone. There was George, who thought that every boy should have his fling. So the big question arose, "Who is right?" Someone must be right and someone must be wrong. All could not be right.

IV.—CHRIST AS AN IDEAL.

Then Tom remembered these words, "Having been made perfect He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation"; and it dawned upon him that Christ was the perfect ideal, the Man who was always right. God knowing that nothing was perfect among men, had gathered into one all the best there is in love, in truth, in kindness, and in every virtue, and then sent that one Jesus Christ into the world to live His life before men. Imagine that you are painting a picture and that you search the ends of the world and procure absolutely perfect colors and then you apply them in an absolutely perfect way. The result is a picture of perfect beauty. That is what we have in Christ. Go to the Bible and search out his virtues. This entire world has no greater example of love, of courage, of sincerity, of all virtues. Christ embodies all that's good in the world within his own life—he is the perfect ideal.

Here the death on the cross flashed into Tom's mind. If Christ was perfect why such a death? In meditating upon it Tom found that Christ had set him a good example when it came his turn to suffer on the battlefield. But still more, Christ showed that he was willing to back up his words and deeds with His life. Search history from beginning to end and you will never find a single person who laid down their life so voluntarily as Christ. He had the privilege of leaving the country the night before the crucifixion. He had the chance to deny Himself when Pilate asked, "Art Thou the Christ?" He had many ways of escape, but He would stand by His words. The most eloquent thing Jesus Christ ever did was to die on the cross. Christ was a perfect ideal and the cross gave proof of His perfection.

V.—CHRIST MORE THAN AN IDEAL.

Not only is Christ a perfect model, but He is more than that. Tom found that everyone fell short of their ideals. Jim, for instance, tried to be big hearted, but when they were on the march two nights before he had helped to raid a chicken coop and then laughed at the farmer who made complaint. Jim failed in his bigheartedness. Tom turned

away at the thought of it to see in his mind those words, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Christ would help him attain the ideals he had set. Christ was more than an ideal, He was a helper.

Sometime ago a man wandered into one of our city missions. The man in charge had been an old pal of his. Together they had robbed many safes and then separated; one converted and working in the mission, the other going the old path. Now the latter, after a number of years, had come back and wandered into the mission drunken and without hope. Under the influence of the meeting he sobered and made a resolution to try to be better. They secured him a job carrying messages. Within two years he was one of the trusted employees of a bank handling thousands of dollars every day. Where will you find any but the power of God that will raise a man to his best like that?

Then Christ is more than an ideal in another respect. Tom experienced something more. There were times when Tom didn't do right in spite of himself. God's help was present, but Tom simply wouldn't be helped. Then Tom repented of the wrong he did and remembered the words, "He that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out" and sought God's pardon. And always there came to Tom the feeling within him that he had been forgiven. Where will such a consciousness of pardon be found except through Christ?

CONCLUSION.

So Tom found an old God in a new way, at least new to himself. Men in their sins were groping for the true light, the true ideal, and God sent Jesus Christ to give men a perfect ideal. Nor was that all. He gave to Christ the power to help men attain that ideal and when they fell and repented to lift them up.

Who wouldn't follow a leader like that?

ADDRESS OF DR. WARREN H. WILSON

In charge of Church and Country Life Work of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

THIS is the most perfect expression of the life of a community I have ever witnessed. The address this morning by Dr. S. Hall Young, using the phrasing and the feeling of religious fellowship and tracing the history of a cluster of families, was surely a rare event. Our ears will seldom hear the like. The audience which sat silent to hear and to see the most eloquent among the distinguished sons of this community moved me strangely. All that we almost feel and see throughout the years of a community's routine life was then in evidence. We are still assembled on the stage of this beautiful grove, dramatizing this community. It is a unique community. Yet it is representative of the best and most frequent type of rural community throughout the United States.

All the world has been here and to all the world you have sent forth the rays of your thought and the lightning message of your prayers—and your sons and daughters have gone forth along the lines of your literary, scientific, missionary and business interests. You are able to call home "your sons and daughters from far." The whole world has been richer for French Creek. There are cities which have not contributed so much as you have to the wealth of mankind.

The whole day has been filled with the past. And I have been deeply impressed with the fact that the center of the audience has been filled with the grave and beautiful faces of the older men and women, whose happiness is in the story of the past. But what of the future of French Creek? Will it continue to give forth such sons and daughters? Are your schools inspiring such scientists and training such business men, or must they go away from home while they are still unformed in mind, to be formed upon the model of the towns and to forget French Creek. Is this old church, built by the grandfathers and unchanged by the touch of the hands or the ideas of two generations, sending out missionaries now? Is the home among these beautiful hills as attractive to the young woman of the present day as was the pioneer cabin to the adventurous bride of one hundred years ago? Is it adequate to her tastes and needs as the house in town is.

The past twenty-five years in American country life have seen an awakening to the heavy cost the town lays upon the country community. Many little towns that boasted at first of their brilliant sons sent forth into high places, have learned to mourn that none of them stayed at home. Is this church that has given Hall Young to a world ministry assured of a Hall Young in her own pulpit, training the young in the missionary spirit?

For the past ten years we who love the country church and community have been observing and recording what things make for the

immortality of the country community. For surely the community ought to live on, if the soul lives on. If we preach that personality enters into endless life through the gospel, we are prone to expect the church —to which the minister devotes his personality— to live on in an immortality on earth. The immortal church is a truer token that our dear ones gone before are living in heaven than any other witness. The white stone on the graveyard speaks to us of the dear body sleeping there. But the church keeps alive our faith in immortality.

The power of the life of the church is in the community. French Creek has always had a keen sense of this, appearing in the frequent references in the address of Dr. Hall Young today and of his Father fifty years ago. With the seeing eye they have discerned that the church lives or dies with the life or death of the community. What then makes a community to live? What are the sources of immortality for the church? The first of them is good roads. In France they know this; for those towns which have been so obliterated that they cannot be found, in whose crumbled brick-dust heaps lives not even a house-dog, or a slinking cat or rat, they are rebuilding these towns by rebuilding first the roads. Not first the personalities, as we Americans would have done, who sacrifice all to the worship of personality and career, but first the roads. When these towns are rebuilt, the churches will be rebuilt too, more beautiful then ever, and they will have the power of an endless life in them, as well as the story, the gospel, of heavenly immortality.

Second, the American country community needs organization to preserve the estates of its people. You remember how in the history of early days on French Creek settlers had to leave, or did leave, whose titles to land came into question. The American farmer of the present time faces the same compulsion. Half the farmers in Ohio had moved in five years, according to a recent inquiry—just as half the farmers on French Creek moved in 1839, because their estates were taken from them. We need therefore in the interest of the community, co-operative and business organization among farmers, owners and tenants; for credit, for manufacture, for purchase and sale—in order that enough of the profit remain in the community to make the farmers and their sons content. It would be perfectly justifiable if this church open its sacred doors to the meeting for farm organization, because its own future depends upon the satisfaction and success of the farmer.

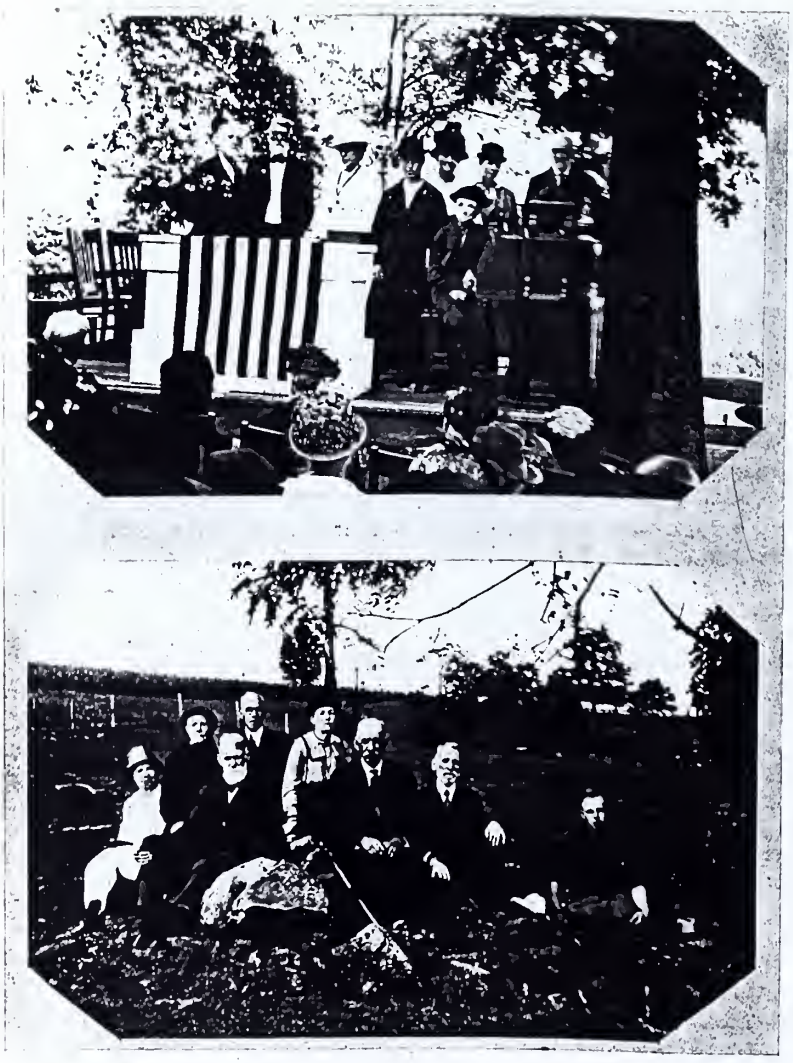
Third, the country community and the church with it will be made immortal by better health service. In the recent influenza epidemic, cities, crowded as they are, suffered less; and country people, who enjoy fresh air and may have pure water, suffered most. The average American farmhouse is still a miner's cabin, or a hunter's lodge, so far as sanitary appliances are. The women feel this and the younger women especially. They go to live in town by preference because there they have running water always and sanitary appliances as a matter of course. You must satisfy young women if the church is to live on, for the woman is the brooding mother of the community just

as she is the mother of the child. Where she elects to be married and bring forth her children and rear them, there the church will find its immortality.

It would do much to perpetuate this church if a society were formed for public health service, which should study the conditions read the bulletins of the state and national departments and employ a visiting nurse throughout this region. In time I believe that the state will do this, but in the present period it must be done as an emergency measure necessary to the continuance of the population as a community of farmers resident upon the land. If even a few of them go, another church will be brought in and then all the evils of religious competition are introduced. For remember that the people who desire better roads and better health and better schools and a better income are drawn from the best families you have, they are the material out of which the pillars of the church must be made.

Fourth, the community has immortality in these days through the modernization of the schools. Such a church as you have in French Creek is incomplete without a school adequate to the training of the youthful minds in modern science as it has to be practiced on the farm, in the mine, or in business. The boy of this time seeks the beginnings of engineering, of biology of chemistry, or he requires to know about business organization and principles in Economics, or to have the introduction to farming in applied Botany. The happiness of this day has been in your pride of heart over your favored sons. But are you organizing your schools in such a way as to train your younger sons and daughters to be equally brilliant? If you do not they will not stay, and their children will never return. Many American communities have made that mistake, especially in New England from which your ancestors came. They permitted the towns to have all the advantages in schools and the result is that their sons and daughters have gone into manufactures, business and mining, doing well or ill as the case might be; while the old farms have passed into the hands of foreigners, who are making fortunes out of a soil a second time made fertile. The old churches of the Puritans are closed up and an intoning bell and a chanting priest have their new edifice in the valleys where your ancestors lived. All honor to the man who reorganizes the French Creek public schools. Presbyterianism is built upon education as much as upon preaching.

I am glad the old church has a resident pastor again. I am glad too that he represents the Synod as well as this congregation. The continuance of this church is of national concern. The sacrifices that any man can make, and the service he can render in giving to the French Creek Church and community, a continuance will do more for the kingdom of God than the same effort invested elsewhere, because this is good human and religious stock. This place may still produce missionaries, bankers, scientists and writers of living books, if its people will only build as well for the future as they have striven to remember and to honor the past.



Above: Choir composed persons who were present at the Semi-Centenary Celebration of the church, singing, "How Firm a Foundation Ye Saints of the Lord."

Below: Group of descendents of Robert Young seated on the fallen chimney of his pioneer home.

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

To COL. THOMAS E. HODGES

By THE PEOPLE OF FRENCH CREEK, WEST VIRGINIA

DURING many years gone by, whenever the people of the French Creek Presbyterian Church assembled to do honor to any occasion or to join together in any social or religious anniversary, they have had the joy of the presence of many of the sons and daughters of this favored community. Among those who so frequently returned to the old home was usually seen one of the greatest and best of all our French Creek boys, a very prince among men, an outstanding personality, a scholar, a Christian gentleman, Col. Thomas E. Hodges. He was a modern representative of Bunyan's lovable character, "Great Heart." In physical proportions he was large; in mind he was built on the same large plan; in heart he was like his Master, for he was broadly sympathetic and abounded in those graces that are in Jesus Christ.

Col. Hodges was honored as a school man, a military man, a man of great worth in the business, scientific and social world; he stood high in the courts of his own church; he was also a man of influence in the political world. In many ways his fellowmen loved to do him honor, and he was worthy of all the honors that he bore. His degrees and titles were many, and hosts of friends in our State and in other parts of our nation have called him "Col. Hodges" or "Dr. Hodges," but to the people of French Creek alone belongs the right of bringing this tribute of filial love to him who for so many years dwelt in our midst, and to bestow upon him the best of all his names, "Tommy Hodges." Bearing that name he came to our Sabbath School and learned from good men and women to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. During all his life he followed in the same pathway of Christian service into which he was directed by the men and women, who, early in his life, had so great influence over him. With the devotion of a loyal son he always spoke of French Creek, and with a most reverential tone he ever uttered the names of those who first touched his life with the very touch of Christ, and all his friends here have always delighted to keep up that close relationship by calling him "Tommy." We may forget some of his earthly honors, but for generations to come the people of French Creek will cherish the name and love the memory of "Tommy" Hodges.

The people of French Creek have met today in celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the organization of the French Creek Presbyterian Church. Recently there has come to us a message saying that " 'Tommy' Hodges is dead.' " He is not dead; he sleeps. His

works do follow him. Our memory of his good life will live until another hundred years have flown. We miss him today, for no longer do we have his genial presence with us nor do we hear his earnest words, but we rejoice while we see another victor take up his crown of life, as the armies of our Lord press forward to the conquest of the world. Another Christian soldier has fought the good fight, has kept the faith, has finished his course.

With uplifted hands we, the people of French Creek, assembled on this Centennary Day, do adopt this simple statement of our love and respect for "Tommy" Hodges, and do pledge our loyal allegiance to the same God and Father whom he served.

Respectfully submitted,

T. K. WINGROVE,
EARLE A. BROOKS, Committee.

MESSAGES OF GREETING

Welfort, Fla.

"The one place I should like to be is the Anniversary at French Creek. Since it may not be possible for me to go, permit me as a token of heart and happy hand to send a check for $20 to your committee who will know how to use it to best advantage for the Home Coming."

CAPT. J. LOOMIS GOULD.

Morgantown, W. Va.

"I received the invitation to be present at the One Hundredth Anniversary celebration of the French Creek Church and would like very much to attend, but, as I will be in Michigan at that time, it will be quite out of the question. I trust the occasion will be all that you have planned for it, and more, and that it will be a stimulus for yet greater work on the part of the church."

REV. EDWARD A. KRAPP, D. D.,
Pastor First Presbyterian Church of Morgantown.

New Rochelle, N. Y.

"French Creek stands out in my memory as one of the beautiful experiences of my life. I often think of the delightful days spent there. Your whole history is replete with interest. The settlement in the wilderness, the years of faithful preaching by Dr. Loyal Young and the remarkable experience of Elder Franklin Phillips and his rescue from a Southern prison by his sister. It is with the deepest regret that I announce to you that I am compelled to forego the pleasure of being with you. I extend personal greetings to all, and be assured of my prayerful interest in the future welfare of your church which during the past century has done such noble work for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ."

REV. L. A. LINDEMUTH.

Fairmont, W. Va.

"You ought all to be very proud of the glorious history of your noble church which has been a light, an inspiration and a benediction to this and other states.

"I am very sorry indeed that I cannot be with you, as I leave for Winona Lake tomorrow. I wish you all God's richest blessing."

REV. H. G. STOETZER, D. D.,
Pastor First Presbyterian Church of Fairmont.

Adams, N. Y.

"We rejoice with you in celebrating the centennial of the church that has produced so many noble men and women, some of whose names have never appeared before the world, and yet they have been a blessing to humanity. I am proud to have been your pastor for even a short time. We will be glad to hear of the success of the celebration. With the very kindest regards to all and constant prayers for your continued success, I am,

"Very cordially yours,
REV. C. L. LUTHER."

Washington, Pa.

"I want to tell you how much disappointed I am not to be able to attend your Centennial Anniversary. I know of no community anywhere higher in its morals and wholesome influence. In my judgment there is no community equal to yours in the State of West Virginia, or in any other State for that matter. Eternity alone will reveal what the church at French Creek has done for the State and the world. I congratulate you and the church and the entire community on a hundred years of fine service."

REV. GEORGE W. POLLOCK,
Pastor Presbyterian Church.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

"I regret my inability to accept your kind invitation, for it would have been a genuine pleasure to have rejoiced with you all and to have had fellowship with my sincere friends up there. My earliest knowledge of the glories of French Creek was imparted to me by Dr. Hodges, who had a thorough appreciation of what that church and community did for him and a host of others."

REV. A. M. BUCHANAN, D. D.

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